

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 444

CE 061 851

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TITLE Towards a Learning Workforce: A Policy Discussion
Paper on Adult Learners at Work.
INSTITUTION National Inst. of Adult Continuing Education,
Leicester (England).
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.)
(120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Continuing Education; *Economic Development;
*Educational Needs; Educational Policy; Employee
Attitudes; Employer Attitudes; Foreign Countries;
*Government Role; *Labor Force Development; *On the
Job Training; Postsecondary Education; Skill
Development; Technical Education; Technological
Advancement; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain

ABSTRACT

There is widespread agreement in Great Britain that the work force must receive more skills training if the country is to be competitive in the future. Of special concern is the 70 percent of the work force who left school at the earliest possible opportunity, and the (overlapping) 70 percent of the work force who have not received training for a long time. Barriers to training are seen as lack of time, lack of money, and negative attitudes toward learning. Recommendations can be made to government, to employers, to training and enterprise councils, and to educational institutions to improve access to skills training for all workers. Recommendations offered in this paper include the following: (1) the government should support paid learning for 30 hours per year for all adults and grant them the right to an additional unpaid 30 hours per year for study; (2) government should require employers to spend a minimum amount on employee development programs; (3) government should support adults seeking to reenter the labor market; (4) employers should audit skills of their existing staff, analyze organizational needs, and offer more job training opportunities to employees, including part-time employees; and (5) educational institutions should provide more accessibility for classes and more flexible requirements for entry and program completion. (KC)

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TOWARDS A LEARNING WORKFORCE



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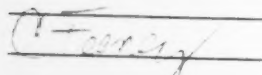
A Policy Discussion Paper on Adult Learners at Work



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*The National Institute of Adult
Continuing Education*

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April 1991

CF 061 851

First published in 1991 by the National Institute of
Adult Continuing Education
19b De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE.
Tel: 0533 551451; fax: 0533 854514.

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Cover design by PRAKASH RATHOD,
Leicester (0533) 551001.

Cover photographs (top to bottom): GLOBCAT • PHILIP WOLMUTH • ANNA SMALLEY

Printed in Great Britain by Stanley L. Hunt Ltd, Rushden, Northants.

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PREFACE

Most nations recognise today that the quality of the education and training of the workforce is the single most important factor in determining economic competitiveness. Learning pays. Though not by itself a *sufficient* condition, a world-class workforce is certainly a *necessary* condition for national economic success.

For this reason the growing concern for education and training in the UK is welcome and timely. While all parts of the system need attention and improvement, it is probably true that the ablest and the more privileged are quite well served: others are not. This report is concerned with those groups which are disadvantaged, whether by nature, circumstance, background or social attitudes.

Towards a learning workforce is above all concerned with adult learning in the UK. Of the entire adult workforce 70 per cent left school at the first opportunity; 70 per cent have had no recent education or training. Obviously, these two groups overlap strongly. If we are to achieve the economic success and individual fulfilment that we seek, all must be enabled to improve their skills and knowledge. And yet the groups that the report is concerned with are often overlooked when employers make their investments in training.

Whether a developed nation seeks to create a welfare state or a social market, there is a collective social obligation to provide for the disadvantaged and underprivileged. Experience and common sense teach us that this obligation will not be met merely by relying on market forces and the self-interest of employers. This is a role for government, the instrument whereby a society meets its obligations.

Governments can do only three things: offer leadership, legislate and provide financial incentives. This report concludes that all three will be required if we are to create a world-class workforce in which everyone can play a role. It invites the government, first, to assume responsibility for creating a culture of learning; secondly, to use its legislative powers to establish an adult entitlement to education and training; thirdly, to ensure that resources are available to support priority groups – those with the fewest advantages and the most needs. It is recognised that the principle of the overall cash-limiting of public expenditure may well require the redirection of some public funding, at present being used to help more privileged members of society, to meet the collective social obligation set out in this report. The issue of resources is fundamental. Here, as elsewhere in the complex challenge of creating a learning society, more undoubtedly means different.

Sir Christopher Ball

SUMMARY

There is widespread agreement that Britain needs a massive expansion in investment to skill its workforce. Much has been written highlighting the needs of managers, supervisors, skilled workers and of young people entering work. This report concentrates on the needs of adults in the workforce and, in particular, on the 70 per cent who have had no recent training or education opportunities, at work or elsewhere. They include many unskilled and semi-skilled working-class people, a disproportionately large number of women, people with basic skills needs, people with disabilities, black people, and many part-time workers. Many left school with no qualifications, and will have had some experience of unemployment; many are sceptical of the merits of education and training. Many experience lack of time and lack of finance as major barriers to participation; others find there are no relevant courses for them to join. Large numbers learned early that education is for other people. However, the spectacular success of the Ford Employee Development and Assistance Programme in recruiting more than 40 per cent of its workforce to participate in programmes of study for personal development is evidence that people with little education or training experience can be encouraged to study if enough attention is paid to stimulating a readiness to learn. That experience is shared by adult educators who have targeted these groups of learners over the last fifteen years.

NIACE recognises that the full costs of the expansion of learning opportunities needed in Britain cannot be borne from the public purse, and that employers and individuals will have to contribute more. Nevertheless, NIACE argues that government has a particular responsibility to build on employers' support in meeting the learning needs of the groups identified in this report since:

- large numbers in these groups must acquire skills to meet labour market needs resulting from demographic and industrial change
- many employers are unlikely to pay, particularly for the growing numbers of part-time workers, or for those in small enterprises
- most people in these groups will not, initially, see education as a 'good' worth paying for.

The report reviews current barriers to participation and evidence of what is being done now to meet the needs of the bulk of adult learners in the workforce, and makes a number of recommendations:

To Government

To secure a change in the culture of learning by:

- the adoption of learning targets for adults recommended by the CBI Task Force
- the adoption of a legislative entitlement for all adults between 16 and 65 to paid learning for 30 hours a year, supplemented by a right to 30 hours a year unpaid study leave. Legislation would need to be backed by cash-limited government funding, to supplement employers' existing and expanded training budgets, and by clear priorities for access to funding if demand exceeds budgets. Individuals could store up unused entitlements for a number of years
- the introduction of a benchmark tax requiring all firms to spend a minimum of 1.2 per cent of wage costs on training or personal development programmes or to

contribute to TEC budgets for the purchase of training for unskilled and semi-skilled adults

- affording employers tax relief on sums invested in training
- developing and extending the National Record of Vocational Achievement to create a 'learning passport' to which all adults can have access
- extending personal tax relief to cover expenditure on personal development as well as certificated, vocational education and training, and to cover childcare costs, and transport costs above a certain distance
- extending provision for mandatory grants and loans to part-time students in higher education and to all students in further education
- continuing to recognise its responsibility for funding provision for unemployed adults seeking to re-enter the labour market
- creating a single ministry for education and training that is able to give a proper centrality to issues affecting adult learners.

To Employers

Employers will need to make human resource development strategies central to their plans for economic success in the 1990s, and must expect to increase the proportion of turnover invested in training and other staff development strategies. To achieve more effective training and human resource development for their workforce, employers will need to consider:

- undertaking a skills audit of existing staff
- analysing the skills needs of the organisation
- preparing a training plan for business development and personal development
- undertaking a training agreement with workers' representatives
- monitoring the effectiveness of training in the short, medium and long term
- linking on-the-job and off-the-job training to local and national arrangements for the accreditation of learning
- developing in-company guidance on education and training for workers, and linking that provision to the local network of services
- supporting the introduction of the National Record of Vocational Achievement (NROVA) for all workers
- developing wider human resource development strategies, to include career moves (especially the Japanese strategy of 'horizontal progression' which enables workers to undertake a variety of jobs in the same firm)
- offering opportunities for part-time staff to participate in education and training
- funding general education initiatives like the Ford and Rover schemes.

To Training and Enterprise Councils

TECs will need to give priority to labour supply issues by targeting local programmes which:

- give priority to basic skills for the workforce
- target support for part-time workers, as well as support for unemployed people seeking preparatory study to gain employment
- support training and education initiatives in small businesses
- support the development of central mechanisms to accredit prior experiential learning
- develop the language skills of the workforce.

NIACE agrees with the Further Education Staff College that TECs should:

- establish partnerships and provide a forum for consultation which include local education authorities and colleges
- include education partners in TEC sub-groups
- aim to produce a flexible training strategy through inter-TEC co-operation
- provide industrial representatives to assist with college management and evaluation, specifically addressing the needs of adult learners
- ensure access to education, training and employment for non-traditional clients by using the expertise of the LEAs and colleges in relating to the wider community.

To Educational Institutions

Educational institutions need to generalise current innovations to foster learning environments sensitive to adult learners in the workforce through:

- shifting the balance in provision to increase flexibility of choice for learners
- providing accessible guidance services
- developing schemes to assess and accredit prior learning
- developing the modularisation of courses, and credit accumulation and transfer schemes, and extending them to include work-based learning
- developing further the curriculum range offered through Open Learning strategies (with tutorial support)
- rigorous development of the system of National Vocational Qualifications complemented by the development of a national network of accreditation-based Open College Federations to give potential returners a framework for a learning programme leading to work
- development of outreach work, in association with trade unions and others, to help potential workers identify and participate in an appropriate programme of learning, and to support firms in mapping needs
- provision of childcare facilities, access for people with disabilities, language support for bilingual learners, and other learning support services to overcome barriers to adult participation in study.

No single measure will secure the culture change necessary to make Britain a learning society, but taken together, and accompanied by a real increase in investment by individuals, employers and government, NIACE believes these will do much to create an engaged and learning workforce.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 *Towards a learning workforce* is the third in a series of policy discussion papers issued by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education to address public policy issues affecting opportunities for adult learners in the 1990s. As the national federal organisation representing the interests of adult learners and those who make provision for them, NIACE encompasses a wide diversity of voluntary and statutory bodies in its membership and in its work. That diversity reflects the very wide range of contexts in which adults learn; a range which itself creates problems in seeking coherent planning to encourage all adults to learn actively – whether formally or informally, in directly work-related study, in pursuit of creative leisure or to play full and energetic roles as active citizens. The two earlier published discussion papers *Learning throughout adult life* and *Adults in higher education* address these issues, and make a number of proposals to government, local education authorities, institutions, employers and individuals.
- 1.2 In 1989 the NIACE Executive decided to establish a working group to look at issues affecting adult learners in industry because it recognised that adult learners are central to human resource development in the British economy in the 1990s, that its membership often lacked an overview of development in a rapidly changing field, and that as a result institutions were sometimes unable to play a full part in creating the partnerships necessary to the making of a learning workforce.
- 1.3 Sir Christopher Ball agreed to chair a NIACE working party which would meet four times, advise NIACE officers on the drafting of a policy discussion paper and report back to NIACE Executive and Council. The following people agreed to serve on the working party:

Sir Christopher Ball
 Jacqui Buffton, *Ford EDAP*
 Bert Clough, *TUC*
 Chris Duke, *Department of Continuing Education, University of Warwick*
 Nick Everest, *Lucas Automotive Ltd*
 Keith Forrester, *TUC, University of Leeds*
 Frances Graham, *Workbase Training*
 Allan J Johnston, *British Steel PLC*
 Roy Moore, *Ruskin College*
 Basil Murphy, *BACIE*
 Sue Otter, *UDACE*
 John Stanworth, *Polytechnic of Central London*
 Sue Webb, *The Industrial Society*
 John Williams, *The Engineering Council*

Their work has been serviced by Alan Tuckett and Shiela Carlton, the Director and Secretary of NIACE. The text of the policy paper has been discussed fully by the working party, but responsibility for it lies with the Director of NIACE, its author. NIACE is grateful to members of the group for their work.

- 1.4 The audience for the paper is firstly the Council of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, the organisations represented there and institutions making provision for adult learners. The paper seeks to summarise current debates on developments in training and education as they affect adult learners, and to make recommendations on changes that would improve opportunities for those in the workforce (or seeking to join it) who have had least continuing education and training since leaving school.
- 1.5 Language always presents a problem in debates about education and training. Continuing education, for example, is used to mean two different things in the education of adults at present. On the one hand, it has been used as a broad generic term to indicate the education of adults after a break from compulsory education. At the same time, it is used with a narrower meaning to cover the professional and vocational education initiatives offered in higher education institutions. The distinction between education and training is deeply embedded in the institutional structures and practices of British society; and within educational institutions the distinction between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' or recreational education persists, despite 40 years of argument that course offers do not and cannot prescribe the purposes learners bring to their studies. In this report there is a focus on adult learners and adult learning, because NIACE believes that learners, employers, trade unions and educational bodies need to draw on the strengths of all of these contributing traditions. Changes in policy and provision need to focus on what adults learn and how they learn it, rather than on what institutions teach, if adults are to be encouraged and supported to fulfil their learning potential in industry and elsewhere. The report is concerned with learning gained informally in work, or through experience, as well as that resulting from planned education or training opportunities. The term 'adult learner' is taken to signify anyone who is learning following a break at the end of initial education and training. 'Industry' is used to include public, private, co-operative and voluntary sector enterprises, making products or delivering services.

THE CASE FOR A LEARNING WORKFORCE

- 2.1 Britain needs to make a major commitment to stimulating adult learning in the 1990s, for the economic health of the country and the personal development of its people. What is needed is the creation of a culture of learning. To achieve it government, employers and trade unions, education and training providers and individual adults will need to change attitudes, change practices, and reorder priorities.
- 2.2 Every authority, from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), agrees that the British workforce is less skilled, less flexible and less qualified than its international competitors (*inter alios* Ball, 1990; Cassels, 1990; CBI, 1989; Coopers & Lybrand, 1985; Training Agency, 1989a; TUC, 1989). There is a recognition that a commitment to training varies widely between economic sectors, and that too much of the training that is offered is narrowly job-specific. There is agreement that there is a need for a massive expansion of the amount of training in the economy, improvement in the levels of skills in the workforce, and continued learning throughout life. There is also agreement that the system of training evolved in Britain over the last twenty years needs a substantial overhaul. As the Government White Paper *Employment for the 1990s* stated: 'By any measure there is a need for radical reform of our training system' (Department of Employment, 1989). However, the weight of attention in this debate has been on the needs of managers and skilled workers, on full-time rather than part-time staff, young people rather than adults. This report concentrates on the needs of adults in the workforce and, in particular, on the 70 per cent who have had no recent training or education opportunities, at work or elsewhere (Training Agency, 1989a).
- 2.3 It is understandable that there has been a focus on the need to increase participation rates in post-school education and training by young people, both full- and part-time. This has a double benefit. First, it means more skilled young people enter the workforce. Secondly, it will lead to greater subsequent participation in continuing education, as people come back to build on their successful initial experience. However, Britain needs both a major increase in the number of young people extending their initial education and training, and a massive expansion in on-the-job and off-the-job learning opportunities for adults.
- 2.4 The case for improved opportunities for management training is vital, and has been well made in a number of reports (*inter alios* Ainley & Comey, 1990; Cassels, 1990; Finegold & Soskice, 1988; Handy, 1987). Poorly trained managers and low-quality goods and services often go hand in hand, and weak managers offer their staff little opportunity for creativity in their work, or opportunities for career development. Investing in improving the quality of management has a knock-on effect throughout enterprises (Finegold & Soskice, 1988). There is a need to create ladders of progression to enable workers to secure promotion through their investment in their own learning. This is particularly important for women. There is also a need to recognise the importance of more

informal ways of learning, and to create in the workplace an environment in which people want to (and do) learn as they go about their work. Again, investment in the continuing education and training of skilled workers and supervisory staff is necessary for firms to maintain competitiveness, and to keep pace with product development in markets increasingly sensitive to high-quality, cost-effective customised production and design (Training Agency, 1989a). There is evidence to show that firms which invest in skilling the workforce enjoy high productivity and high levels of profit, but there is a continuing debate about whether this link is cause or effect.

- 2.5 Unskilled and semi-skilled adults have, until now, enjoyed less access to education and training than the rest of the workforce, and NIACE research shows that they are less likely to undertake independent learning (Sargant, 1990). Provision for their training and education usually costs much less than management training. As Hayes (1989) argues: 'It turns out that countries which invest in *all* their people, and not only the most talented, have also the most successful economies'.
- 2.6 However, Britain is better at topping-up the skills of those who have already enjoyed extended education and training opportunities than skilling the rest of its people. Many people learn early that education is not for them (McGivney, 1990). This attitude and experience can be found amongst a wide range of workers in all kinds of jobs, but it inhibits the full participation of many:
 - women returning to work
 - people with basic education needs (for literacy, numeracy or to speak the English language)
 - working-class men and women
 - people with few or no educational qualifications
 - ethnic and linguistic minority groups
 - older adults
 - people with learning difficulties
 - people living in rural communities
 - people working in small businesses
 - part-time workers.
- 2.7 As Cassels (1989) observed, these are exactly the groups that successful employers will turn to, to help overcome the problems they face resulting from the major demographic changes affecting the British workforce. At present 70 per cent of the adult workforce has no recent experience of training or educational opportunities, off- or on-site. Of the 30 per cent who have had such opportunities, many enjoyed an extended initial education. Yet the pace of industrial change and changing demography make it essential that all adults are persuaded and supported to become active learners, not least because 80 per cent of the workforce in the year 2000 are at work already.
- 2.8 If there is to be a major expansion in learning opportunities for these groups, and Britain is to develop a skilled and flexible workforce, the key question of who is to pay needs to be answered. Whilst many governments, both in and outside the European Community, who face comparable problems (though often on a less acute scale) are increasing their expenditure on training, the UK Government is decreasing expenditure in this area. This is not because it simply lacks commitment to the principle that training and education for the workforce should

be increased, as successive speeches by ministers make clear. It is, rather, that the lesson the Government has drawn from the experience of central planning and intervention in the 1960s and 1970s is that it does not work, and that effective training strategies are best designed, undertaken and funded by employers. In *Skills 2000* (1989), the TUC observed that: 'in no developed economy is the market vested with such power over training today', and that nowhere else 'it is considered that individual investment decisions will provide the sort of trained workforce that a developed economy of the next century will need'.

- 2.9 NIACE recognises that there is keen argument about the relative importance to be given to planning and to the market in fostering expansion in education and training overall, and that there will be a need for everyone – individuals, employers and government – to spend more if Britain is to bridge the skills gap. However, whether provision is funded by government, by individuals or by employers, whether it is training or more broadly based personal development, significant areas of the workforce have not, until now, participated. Particularly where workers are in part-time employment or employed in small firms, it is difficult to see how employers can be persuaded to meet the costs of expansion. NIACE believes that government has a particular responsibility to ensure that affordable learning opportunities are available for those who benefited least from initial training and education. It will need to create a climate and a legislative framework that will encourage their participation in learning, and to target funding on specific initiatives to that end. No single initiative will solve the problems of aspiration and achievement, but NIACE believes that the introduction of the measures argued in this report will, taken together, do much towards the creation of a learning workforce.

2.10 Barriers to participation

The Training Agency report, *Training in Britain* (1989a), identified three major barriers to adult participation in training and educational activities related to work:

- finding time to study
- obtaining funding for training
- fears about job security.

The report also pointed to employers' scepticism about the value of training and education, and to the very different aspirations and access to education and training experienced by employees. The complexity of the post-compulsory education and training system also acts as a barrier to participation for many people.

2.11 Individual attitudes

In her NIACE research study, *Education's for other people: access to education for non-participant groups* (1990), McGivney reinforces the Training Agency finding that time to study and finance are major barriers to participation. Additionally, under-participating groups share a lack of awareness of their learning needs, a lack of confidence in their ability to learn, and lack of access to guidance and advice. She also identified specific barriers affecting particular groups. Working-class people had a strong sense that 'education is not what people like us do'. Black people encountered explicit and covert racism, and a

failure to recognise the experience and understanding gained in different cultural contexts. These attitudes were reinforced by institutional barriers – themselves the product of attitudes about who should study. Women with dependent children, usually working part-time, found that transport, the absence of childcare, traditional gender roles and the resulting lack of social autonomy were inhibitors to undertaking study. People with disabilities experienced a number of practical barriers inhibiting participation.

- 2.12 Two other groups experience specific barriers to participation. The most recent estimate of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) is that 13 per cent of Britain's adults have difficulties in using the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling or basic numeracy. Many need to use literacy and numeracy skills in the course of their work (ALBSU, 1990). However, the voluntary organisation Workbase has shown in a number of its studies of the basic skills needs of workers in particular firms that people may be unwilling to declare their difficulties because of anxieties about job security (Workbase, 1990).
- 2.13 Another ALBSU report, *A nation's neglect* (1989), estimates that four in ten adults in Britain's linguistic minorities have difficulty with written or spoken English and the existing qualifications of many go unrecognised in the UK. Whilst employers may be able to make effective use of the contribution a multilingual workforce can make to international marketing, effective communication in English is a key prerequisite for efficient and safe working, and language difficulty inhibits workers from fully realising their potential.
- 2.14 These groups share a set of experiences with people who have been out of work for a period. In order to benefit from training or education that might lead to improving skills at work (or to gaining a job in the first place) the individual has to feel confident and ready to learn, and needs access to appropriate advice and guidance and to learning opportunities that start from the individual's perceived needs. Most people in these groups will not, in the first instance, see education and training as a 'good' worth paying a lot of money for; and most will not have the confidence to pursue active, conscious strategies for independent learning.
- 2.15 **Employers' scepticism**

Training in Britain showed that 20 per cent of employers in Britain offered no training at all, and among those who did, there was considerable scepticism about the value to their individual enterprises of money spent on training (Training Agency, 1989b). There was evidence, too, that firms may be discouraged from training since such investment is embodied in the individual who may be poached by competitors. Anxiety about poaching may contribute to the tendency amongst British firms to concentrate on narrow job-specific skills rather than on more generic skills training, or to rely on others to produce trained staff (Training Agency, 1989a). These concerns assume a particular importance in Britain because of its reliance on employer-led initiatives in training. Studies by the National Economic Development Office and others make clear that there is a close relationship between macro-investment in education and training and the relative economic performance of countries. There are a number of studies on the comparative performance of flexibly trained German manufacturing firms with their British counterparts showing the value to individual enterprises from investing in people (Cassels, 1990; Miliband, 1990).

2.16 Yet for small employers in particular, the arguments against investment in training are also powerful. In evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities, the National Farmers' Union pointed out that 'few agricultural businesses are large enough to provide their own in-house training, but given the small size of workforce on most farms time off for training could mean the absence of 50 or even 100 per cent of the workforce in a business where there may be livestock requiring continuing attention'. The NFU echoed the views of many small businesses in believing that time off for training must have immediate relevance and benefit to the business (House of Lords, 1990).

2.17 The complexity of the system

The complexity of the post-compulsory education and training system in Britain acts as a barrier to participation. Most vocational training is carried out and paid for by private employers. However, further and higher education colleges, polytechnics and universities, and private sector education and training providers support their needs. A wide variety of piecemeal education and training initiatives by government have led to the evolution of a system that is difficult even for professionals to understand. Within that system, the languages of vocational training and of continuing education serve to sharpen differences. The Senior Chief Inspector of Her Majesty's Inspectorate described the diversity and complexity of qualifications offered in further education as 'a jungle in which talent and ability are lost' (*quoted in Ball, 1990*).

2.18 Part-time workers

Changing working patterns will require ... innovatory behaviour by training providers and enlightened self-interest by employers in recognising that concentrating training on their core employees (and relying on traditional sources for skilled recruits) will often be inadequate to meet their skill needs (Training Agency, 1989a).

Training in Britain also notes that: 'changing working patterns ... could actually make this shift towards continuing training more difficult to achieve', given that 'there is an increasing diversity in patterns of employment and employers concentrate training resources on their core staff' (Training Agency, 1989a). Part-time workers in many employment sectors have little access to funded opportunities for training and education and part-time students do not qualify for mandatory grant support for maintenance or for tuition fees. Yet the number of part-time workers in the British labour force is growing quickly, both because more part-time jobs are advertised, and because increasing numbers of people combine self-employment and part-time employment, particularly after taking early retirement. It is important to recognise that part-time workers cost as much as full-time workers to train.

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WHAT IS BEING DONE

- 3.1 Full Employment UK has argued that to produce a change in the culture of education and training in Britain it will be necessary to take a number of related initiatives. No single strategy will, of itself, transform the picture. However, a number of initiatives taken by individuals, educational institutions, industrial employers and government are already improving opportunities for adult learners at work.

3.2 Mapping need

Workbase, the independent training organisation which promotes and provides broad communication skills training for manual employees, has developed a very successful strategy for mapping the education and training needs of workforces. It operates jointly with educationalists, trade unions, and employers. Whilst *Training in Britain* found that a majority of firms covered in its survey of employers did not find any significant weakness in basic education that required extra training effort, Workbase has shown that wherever manual workers are given an opportunity for basic communication skills support their expression of need is overwhelming. Over a decade, Workbase can demonstrate the practical gains for firms in providing opportunities for workers to use their literacy and numeracy skills and gain competence in the English language. In a society with ever greater dependency on written communication, and increasingly complex, information-based industries, and where many adults lose confidence in the basic skills they did acquire at work, Workbase's activities will need to be a core component in a strategy for adult learning in industry. The decision of the Government to fund 30 pilot projects to develop work-based basic skills work through TECs over a three year period is an important start. However, it will be important to recognise that Workbase's skills in mapping educational needs have significant applications across a broader curriculum area (Workbase, 1990).

3.3 Employers' initiatives

The Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP) derives from the 1987 collective agreement between Ford of Britain and the hourly-paid staff unions. It offers workers up to £200 per year for learning programmes that they choose to pursue outside working time, and is distinct from the training programme run and financed by the company. It has had a remarkably successful introduction. Against expectations of an initial 5 per cent participation rate, over 40 per cent – 20,000 workers – had taken courses by the end of the programme's second year. Many of these courses have been specially commissioned and are offered on-site at hours which rotate to accommodate shift working patterns. Although opportunities for golf and driving lessons have been seized eagerly, the most popular courses are languages (especially German) and computing, which clearly have a work-related value (Ford EDAP, 1990). The programme draws on the skills and experience developed in informal adult education, in outreach work, in curriculum design, particularly drawing on the experience of

REPLAN organisers. It has acted as a stimulus to other similar programmes like that mounted by the Rover Group, and other companies and trade unions are exploring its possibilities with the active support of Ruskin College, and its Trade Union Research Unit, which have been closely involved in its design, implementation and evaluation. At the heart of the Ford programme are local education advisers whose role in offering guidance to workers on the best means of pursuing their learning goals has been vital. One lesson arising from the Ford EDAP experience is that where provision of learning opportunities is made easily accessible, demand far outstrips expectations, and that the volume of provision of learning opportunities is itself a barrier to participation. It is ironic, too, that major employers are recognising the benefit in funding programmes which stimulate a willingness and readiness to learn, at the same time as public funding for general uncertificated adult education is diminishing. What is clear from the Ford experience is that any form of adult learning produces confidence and competence that is transferable to work-related contexts.

- 3.4 The same lesson is evident in the Lucas Continuing Education and Training Scheme (CET) which provides for the education and training of Lucas employees in areas which contribute to personal development, broaden personal perspectives and improve personal prospects. The Lucas initiative involves all employees in personal growth opportunities beyond their current job requirements and provides the possibility of paid leave where appropriate. The key to the Lucas scheme is the Personal Development Plan, agreed between workers, their line managers, and the local CET administrator, which identifies personal development goals, and the means by which they can be achieved (Transition, 1989). Lucas and Ford demonstrate that large firms have begun to move quickly to recognise the importance of having a learning workforce in the changed circumstances of the 1990s. A key test of how far such initiatives can be left to the market will be the speed at which comparable strategies are adopted in medium-sized and small firms.
- 3.5 During the 1980s the tripartite approach to staff development and training that had characterised British public policy over the previous 20 years was dismantled by the government. However, there are a number of examples which demonstrate that trade unions and employers co-operate effectively at both local and national levels to facilitate opportunities for adult learning. For example, the National Graphical Association and the British Printing Industries Federation have made a training agreement which provides a mechanism for joint assessment of skill requirements through local Annual Manpower Plans based on each company's market and investment plans. All trainees have an individual training agreement which specifies the modules to be completed, and combines both broad-based and job-specific studies. British Gas has an agreement with the Transport and General Workers' Union, the National and Local Government Officers' Association and the General and Municipal Workers' Union to set up regional training and development departments to oversee their further education and training scheme; and the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers has led an initiative through the trades union body, EURO-FIET, and the employers' body, CECD, to create a qualification for retail employees to be recognised throughout the European communities. 'Transfer Skills Training' to help women in mainly clerical and secretarial jobs to move into sales careers, has been piloted by a joint union-management equality working party established by the United

Dominions Trust and the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (TUC, 1990). Many of these developments are the result of agreements made by joint employer and trade union workplace committees of the sort recommended in the TUC's *Skills 2000* (1989).

- 3.6 A number of firms have recognised that effective human resource development strategies can stimulate a learning culture at work. American mentorship schemes, Japanese quality circles, horizontal career planning and the provision of guidance and advice services for workers to develop career plans and plan for retirement can all be found in British industry, adapted to fit local circumstances. There is, too, a marked increase in the interest shown in the accreditation of work-based learning, through links between large companies and academic institutions. Ti-Oxide, preparing for imminent competition after years of being the sole international supplier of titanium dioxide, organised company in-house training to orient staff to changing work practices and the new climate facing the company in a difficult market. The distinctive feature of their programme is that it involved all staff, from cleaners to the managing director, on equal terms, both in the training and in the team planning strategies that grew out of it.

3.7 Government initiatives

Two initiatives have an important bearing on the complexity of the post-school education assessment and accreditation picture. In 1986, the Government established the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) to develop and accredit National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) based on national standards of competence to be determined by industry lead bodies. By the end of 1992 NCVQ plans to accredit 800 NVQs developed by lead bodies of employers which will cover all aspects of employment, and complete the NVQ framework for levels 1 to 4. The NCVQ is seeking to establish coherence in the qualifications offered in British industry, and to establish a hallmark of quality. Through its focus on competences, it offers a non-competitive structure that seeks to accredit the skills and aptitudes people can demonstrate they possess. In these developments the NCVQ needs warm support, although the slow progress being made on broad generic skills, with a number of lead industry bodies approaching the identification of skills in too job-specific a way at present, is a major worry. If only because the pressure to harmonise qualifications in the European Community is so pressing, it is critical that progress is achieved in this area (Otter, 1989). The work of Open College Federations in providing an accreditation-based network of local post-compulsory education institutions complements NCVQ's initiative. Open College Federations create vital staff development opportunities for workers in different sectors of the post-school education and training world to learn from one another's experiences, to evolve common languages and to seek to develop from the ground upwards a complementary system of accreditation of adult learning (UDACE, 1989).

- 3.8 However, the establishment of a system of National Vocational Qualifications will only afford greater flexibility and mobility in the system if a comparable effort is spent on developing skills in the assessment and accreditation of prior learning (APL). Again, a great deal of work is at present being undertaken in industry and in educational settings to develop APL, but a good deal more is written about than done at present. For people with little previous experience of

education and training after school, the development of APL represents an important mechanism for learners to recognise and value what they already know and to gain credit that will be recognised towards qualifications; but it will be important to complement APL services with adequate guidance and advice services to make them accessible.

- 3.9 Training and Enterprise Councils were established following the Government White Paper, *Employment for the 1990s*, following the Secretary of State's decision to break with the last vestiges of tripartite planning through the Manpower Services Commission. TECs give employers a key role in the development of training strategy. They offer a welcome opportunity to create more locally responsive training strategies, and to foster liaison at a local level between employers and training providers. But it is important that adequate attention is given to the creation of an adequate infrastructure if TECs are to be successful. Many feel that TECs would be strengthened by including employees' representatives in their membership. It would help, too, if TECs had a clearer set of relationships with local authority bodies, and with the further education colleges that continue to offer a large proportion of off-site training. Ensuring that there are effective relationships will be even more important if the Government's plans to fund further education colleges through an FE Funding Council and to remove them from LEAs are introduced. As purchasers of training, TECs will be strongly placed to shape the pattern of training opportunities offered, in firms and in educational institutions, and to have an influence on who is trained. However, as limited companies with performance targets to achieve, there is a danger that TECs may feel forced to concentrate on those who already benefit from existing training offers. To reach people who have previously not participated can be more expensive. There are dangers, too, that the TEC system may find it difficult to identify and meet regional and national training needs. Each of these concerns is exacerbated by the tight budgets which the Councils were given. Nonetheless, the Government clearly charges TECs with a key role in securing a culture change in British industry. In addressing the TEC Directors' Conference in Brighton in October 1990, Michael Howard, Secretary of State for Employment, recognised the importance of seeking change 'in every individual in the workforce'. It is, he said, 'a formidable challenge – formidable because it entails changing deep-seated values and cultures; because it involves issues of personal motivation and individual self-esteem. I think that the highest hurdle we face is to get *individuals* motivated, committed and ready to take charge of their future.' He issued a challenge to each TEC Board to formulate a local strategy in 1991-2 for increasing individual demand for training and development, to design and test innovative ideas in five key areas: 'attitudes; information and advice; access; qualifications and credentials; and financing.'
- 3.10 It is in the field of opening access to learning that adult education organisations have most to contribute to the changes needed. Since the publication of the 1973 Russell Report (*Adult education: a plan for development*) adult educators have developed skills and experience in outreach work with the very target groups now needed in the workforce. They are experienced in designing learning programmes that respond to adults' strengths as learners, in building confidence, and facilitating access to more formal programmes of study. The Government was notably successful in harnessing these skills through its REPLAN education

programme for unemployed adults. REPLAN's strength has been in helping colleges, employers and other providers to take account of experience gained in adult education, and to offer learner-centred programmes. The Government's PICKUP programme has worked in a complementary way to help colleges to respond to the skills needs of industry by providing full-cost, customised short course provision for industry (PICKUP, 1990). There is a continuing need for both strategies in the transformation of the skills base of the workforce.

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WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

- 4.1 As the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities' report on vocational training and retraining makes clear, there is now widespread agreement that the changes sought by Government will not be achieved solely by voluntary means (House of Lords, 1990). At the 'Business in the City' conference on 6 December 1989, the former Secretary of State for Employment, Norman Fowler, endorsed the targets of the CBI Task Force for Adults and extended them, arguing that:

- by 1992 all employees should be taking part in company-driven or developmental activities
- by 1995 at least half of the employed workforce should be aiming for updated or new qualifications within the National Vocational Qualification framework, and should have individual action plans to which their employers, as well as they themselves, are committed
- by the year 2000 a minimum of half the employed workforce should be qualified to level 3 of the National Vocational Qualification or its academic equivalent (A-Level).

He recognised that these targets were demanding but that without them Britain would continue to fail to address the skills needs of its economy and the reasonable aspirations of its people. However, the Government has subsequently shied away from this commitment. Meanwhile, the TUC, which elaborated comparable targets in *Skills 2000* (1989), the CBI and other organisations are now collaborating in setting national targets. NIACE believes that Norman Fowler's speech provides a useful and sensible benchmark for Government policy. To achieve these targets, more money will need to be committed to education and training. Not all that money can come from the public purse, and yet there is considerable resistance to substantial personal investment in education and training. Part of the task of transforming Britain into a learning society will be to create incentives for workers and potential workers to invest in their own futures.

- 4.2 To build on the emerging good practice in British industrial education and training, a number of practical steps need to be taken. No single step will transform the system, but NIACE believes each of the proposals discussed here will benefit adult learners at work.

4.3 Entitlement

The right to vocational training (technical and professional education) is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights and the European Social Charter. Alone among member states, Britain did not sign the Community Charter which declared that 'every worker of the European Community must be able to have access to vocational training and to receive such training throughout his working life'. The FORCE programme, established by the European Community between

1991 and 1994 seeks to give force to the Charter declaration in relation to vocational training, and gives a particular priority to vocational education initiatives in small and medium-sized enterprises. If Britain is to keep pace with the momentum for improving adult skill levels in the European Community, and to catch up, it will need to address these issues as a matter of urgency (Council of the European Communities, 1990).

- 4.4 NIACE believes that the right to learn needs to be widely drawn if those workers and potential workers who participate least in existing vocational training or preparation activities are to be enabled to benefit in the future. In its policy paper, *People, learning and jobs*, NIACE draws on its experience in the REPLAN programme in proposing a range of programmes for low-waged and under-employed adults to foster readiness to learn (NIACE REPLAN, 1990). Full Employment UK (1990) makes the case for an entitlement for all workers to have access to guidance and advice on education and training needs. The work of the National Educational Guidance Initiative of the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE) has demonstrated the importance of employers as a major source of advice on individual workers' education and training needs, that 22 per cent of adults express a need for advice on jobs or careers, education and training, and that 'after the age of 40 interest in advice about training and education declines notably less rapidly than interest in advice on jobs or published information' (Alloway, 1988).
- 4.5 The Department of Employment plans to encourage TECs to establish local guidance, assessment and accreditation centres which should act as a focus for initiatives to help make the needs of learners and customers more central to education and training provision. They should, too, provide a mechanism by which workers and potential workers can have their learning assessed and accredited. Learning at work, at home, or in gaining qualifications overseas needs to be recognised by professional bodies, academic institutions and employers. Assessment and accreditation centres should help to make such recognition possible.
- 4.6 In *Learning by right* (1990), published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Miliband outlines a detailed proposal for a legislative entitlement for all adults between 16 and 65 who are outside full-time education of five days' (30 hours) education and training per year. The entitlement would be backed by cash-limited government funding to supplement employers' existing and expanded training budgets and individuals would have the right to accumulate leave entitlement over a number of years. Any existing validated training provided by an employer and agreed to by an employee would count but the onus of the entitlement proposals would be that they foster choice by the individual – mediated only by advisers who would approve the course undertaken. Miliband estimates that in the first year of a programme, less than £500 million of additional funds could provide for 3,200,000 people. The report recognises the need to make different arrangements for full-time workers, part-time workers, self-employed people, unemployed people, early retirees, informal carers, and others not in paid employment, and to secure the full entitlement with pro rata wage or allowance costs for time off work.
- 4.7 NIACE endorses this proposal. However, in *Learning throughout adult life* (1990), NIACE makes the case for an entitlement of 60 hours a year for

continuing education, and believes that the introduction of an entitlement to 30 hours of funded study would need to be complemented by a right to the same period of unpaid study leave.

- 4.8 Many courses will cost more than can be met from an individual's entitlement. A key element in creating a learning society must be the encouragement of individuals to invest in their own learning. To this end, the 1991 Budget provision for tax relief on courses leading to National Vocational Qualifications is an important beginning, but NIACE believes that the provision must be extended to all learning undertaken by individuals. However, Cassels has argued that few of the least qualified are likely to be attracted by tax relief, and argues the case for a combination of selective grants and low-cost loans to stimulate participation. The CBI believes that government should offer tax relief of up to £1,000 per year on an individual's investment in her or his own continuing education and training. The House of Lords Select Committee recommends the extension of tax relief to cover childcare costs as a specific encouragement to women to participate in education and training for employment. It also argues that travel costs should be reimbursed where distance from a learning centre is an inhibitor to participation (House of Lords, 1990). NIACE believes that a combination of tax relief for training, education and childcare and starter grants and low-cost loans to enable those who have benefited least from previous education and training to meet course costs in excess of the entitlement, would stimulate take-up of an entitlement of the sort proposed in *Learning by right*. The key point that employers recognise, and that government needs to address, is that general, developmental learning leads to instrumental, vocational outcomes, and to invest in general education is to invest in vocational education.

- 4.9 The Ford EDAP scheme makes clear that it is easy to underestimate the level of demand for learning opportunities. Given cash limits, *Learning by right* argues that government will want to identify priorities for support, if demand exceeds the budgets available for the entitlement – either to address specific skills shortages, or to meet the needs of priority groups. The report makes the case for adults with basic skills needs, women returners, and to foster German-style training *Meisters* to act as shop-floor level training managers. The difficulty is to identify priorities and at the same time foster individual choice, and to recognise that adults acquire a 'readiness to learn' in a wide variety of study contexts. NIACE believes that Miliband's priorities are too narrowly drawn. It recognises three categories of learning programmes which may be differentially weighted in awarding entitlements:

Threshold studies: the right of access to a basic set of skills without which it is impossible to function in a fully independent way in the labour market. These skills will include literacy, basic numeracy, and English language, but may be seen to include readiness to learn, and the confidence to participate.

Adaptive studies: these are determined by context; when a firm begins to trade with Germany, workers may need to acquire, or upgrade skills in written and spoken German; line managers accepting training responsibilities (*Meisters*) would take 'training the trainer' studies.

Development studies: protecting the right to time and some financial support for personal development, or to study as an economic investment.

State entitlements should give priority to threshold studies, then adaptive studies, and where resources permit, developmental studies. Studies leading to accreditation, whether through conventional or Open Learning courses, or by APL may also attract priority for funding. However, when approval for leave to study is granted, a programme of study would need to be validated, and the source of financing study identified. Employers will need to continue to contribute to basic skills training to supplement the entitlement, and may expect to meet a high proportion of costs for adaptive studies, and some of the costs of developmental study. Individuals would expect to meet most of the costs of developmental studies.

- 4.10 The key need in the British economy over the next decade is to develop a workforce with skills in critical thinking, and the ability to benefit from reflection, capable of flexible responses to rapidly changing industrial contexts: this involves generic thinking skills which are harder to measure than many job-specific skills. The need to set priorities for funding learning entitlements must not be allowed to inhibit the move to foster learning such skills. At the heart of the argument for a learning entitlement is a belief that, with access to appropriate guidance, people will make choices about their learning needs that will benefit themselves, their enterprises and the economy. The evidence of the Ford and Lucas schemes is that this belief is well-founded.

4.11 **Employers' contribution to financing expansion**

Much of the foregoing argument is based on the view that government needs to reverse the decline in investment in training, and commit substantial new money to human resource development. However, the government needs also to consider mechanisms to ensure that employers bear their share of the costs of producing a skilled workforce, and to create a framework in which provision and take-up of education and training is encouraged. During the 1970s and 1980s the main strategy adopted to secure these ends focused on monolithic national industrial solutions – whether in training schemes or in the creation of Industrial Training Boards. National training programmes from YTS to ET were trapped by unhelpful distinctions between education and training, young people and adults, or people in work and the unemployed. ITBs, created in an attempt to tax 'bad' employers sector by sector, were seen (with the notable exception of the Construction Industry Training Board) as 'bureaucratic, unresponsive to small business needs, and unsuited to co-ordinate training and skills required in more than one sector' (Miliband, 1990). The Institute for Public Policy Research commends the French experience, where the government sets a 'benchmark' amount of expenditure that all firms are expected to spend on training – either directly, or in pooled provision with other firms. The French 'benchmark' is now 1.2 per cent of wage costs. NIACE believes that an obligation to spend at a comparable minimum level, on training or personal development programmes, or to contribute to TEC funds for the purchase of training, targeting unskilled and semi-skilled adults, should be an obligation on British firms. At the same time firms should, as the European Employers Federation and the ETUC agree, be eligible for tax relief on sums invested.

4.12 Small businesses

These measures will not, in themselves, resolve pressures on small businesses. Cassels has argued that group training schemes developed by ITBs – where small firms shared the cost of a professional personnel manager – were an effective measure for stimulating training by small firms (Miliband, 1990). Proposals to support self-employed workers' updating through tax concessions may help some workers, and the focus of the FORCE programme on small and medium sized firms is welcome. However, TECs will need to give priority to supporting training and education in small enterprises, and the Task Force should consider expanding support for small-business education and training support units. For workers in small firms the entitlement proposed above will be of particular importance in securing release.

4.13 Records of achievement

To foster increased individual investment in education and training, government should develop and extend the National Record of Vocational Achievement to create a 'learning passport' for all adults which would record courses taken, learning assessed and accredited, and learning entitlements used. On-the-job and off-the-job training would be valued equally, as would general and job-specific study. Targeted grants or loans could be listed, and passport entries could serve as evidence when claiming tax relief on individual expenditure.

4.14 Part-time work and part-time study

In financing participation in education, government will also need to move to a system for funding institutions and supporting learners that ends discrimination against part-time students. As NIACE has argued in a series of policy papers (Ames, 1988; NIACE, 1989; 1990; Pursaill, 1990), those people combining part-time study and part-time employment are doubly disadvantaged since they are not eligible for mandatory grants and are less likely than full-time colleagues to attract employer funding. Government will need to extend provision for mandatory grants and loans to part-time students in higher education and to all students in further education. In addition, government will need to recognise its continuing responsibility for funding provision for unemployed adults seeking to re-enter the labour market.

4.15 A ministry for education and training

The responsibility for securing a learning workforce is at present divided between two government departments, and there are dangers that this results in a lack of co-ordination between different initiatives. Their responsibilities involve both departments in more or less direct relationships with local authorities and TECs, with independent institutions of higher, and soon perhaps further education, who themselves have overlapping responsibilities. Adult learners tend to be on the margins of the concerns of both departments. Because of the resulting confusion, and because of the need for a clear location for planning, NIACE made the case in *Learning throughout adult life*, for the government to establish a ministry for training and education. The new ministry would embrace the functions of the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Employment to bring about an overall sense of direction, and afford issues affecting adult learners

a proper centrality in government planning. The case for a joint ministry is supported by the Association of County Councils and the Association of Municipal Authorities, and NIACE reaffirms the need in this context.

- 4.16 Employers will need to make human resource development strategies central to their plans for economic success in the 1990s, and must expect to increase the proportion of turnover invested in training and other staff development strategies. Already it is marked that those companies with business plans and human resource development plans offer more training than companies without such plans, and that they are also more likely to offer formal staff appraisal, career moves and general education to their workers. To achieve more effective training and development for their workforce, employers will need to consider:

- undertaking a skills audit of existing staff
- analysing the skills needs of the organisation
- preparing a training plan for business development and personal development
- undertaking a training agreement with workers' representatives
- monitoring the effectiveness of training in the short, medium and long term
- linking on-the-job and off-the-job training to local and national arrangements for the accreditation of learning
- developing in-company guidance on education and training for workers, and linking that provision to the local network of services
- supporting the introduction of the National Record of Vocational Achievement (NROVA) for all workers
- developing wider human resource development strategies, to include career moves (especially the Japanese strategy of 'horizontal progression', which enables workers to undertake a variety of jobs in the same firm)
- offering opportunities for part-time staff to participate in education and training
- funding general education initiatives like the Ford and Rover schemes.

- 4.17 Training and Enterprise Councils will need to give priority to labour supply issues by targeting local programmes which:

- give priority to basic skills for the workforce
- target support for part-time workers, as well as support for unemployed people seeking preparatory study to gain employment
- support training and education initiatives in small businesses
- support the development of central mechanisms to accredit prior experiential learning
- develop the language skills of the workforce.

A recent FEU bulletin (1990) reporting on an industry education seminar at the Further Education Staff College argued that TECs should, *inter alia*:

- establish partnerships and provide a forum for consultation which include local education authorities and colleges
- include education partners in TEC sub-groups
- aim to produce a flexible training strategy through inter-TEC co-operation
- provide industrial representatives to assist with college management and evaluation, specifically addressing the needs of adult learners

- ensure access to education, training and employment for non-traditional clients by using LEAs and college expertise in relating to the wider community.

- 4.18 Educational institutions, training providers and professional bodies can make a major contribution to the cultural change advocated in this paper. To foster learning environments sensitive to adult learners, and responsive to the changing needs of British industry, there will be a need to generalise current innovations; NIACE believes that moves towards achieving these aims should be encouraged and accelerated.

Overall, the education and training system needs a shift in balance in provision to offer learners greater flexibility in pursuing their learning.

Access to educational and training guidance and advice is central to improved, informed choice, and each institution and provider will need to make clear provision of guidance services.

Assessment and accreditation processes need to be developed, to give credit to learning undertaken at work, or elsewhere. Adults have complex learning histories and many thinking of returning to learning, whether at work or to seek work, will underestimate their abilities and the extent of their achievements. Since these processes are expensive, it will be important to price them properly, and to make clear provision for those who cannot pay.

Linked to this, the development of modular courses, credit accumulation and transfer schemes, and provision for learners to join programmes with advanced standing will benefit the majority of adults who need to study part-time. There is a need to build on successes in developing customised provision for firms and, where appropriate, offer credit for such provision.

Developing further the curriculum range offered through Open Learning strategies (with tutorial support) will increase the flexibility of institutions in responding to industry's needs for relevant programmes.

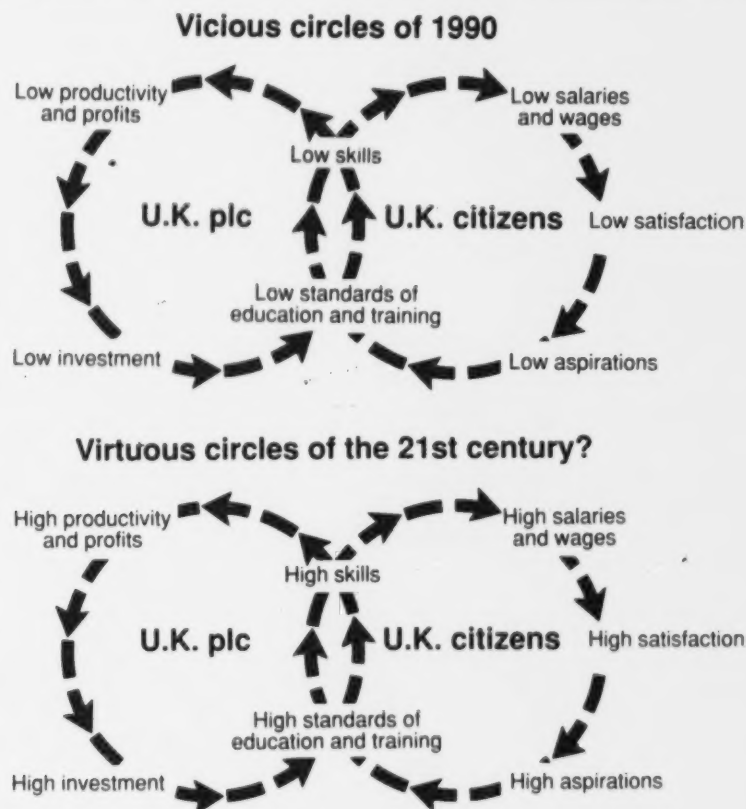
The system of National Vocational Qualifications needs to be developed rigorously and complemented by the development of a national network of accreditation-based Open College Federations to give potential returners a framework for a learning programme leading to work.

There will need to be a development of outreach work, in association with trade unions and others, to help potential workers identify and participate in an appropriate programme of learning, and to support firms in mapping needs.

Institutions will need to provide childcare facilities, access for people with disabilities, language support for bilingual learners, and other learning support services to overcome barriers to adult participation in study.

- 4.19 Local education authorities will need to support institutions in creating a culture for work, learning and training throughout life, and will need to complement the work of Training and Enterprise Councils to ensure that strategic planning supports such a cultural change. As employers, they will want to embed the best of good practice in supporting the learning aspirations of their own employees.

- 4.20 No single measure can transform the low priority Britain has given to investment in the skills and aptitudes of the bulk of its people over the last century. NIACE believes, however, that a combination of measures of the kind outlined in this paper will help to transform prospects for those who have benefited least from Britain's education and training system. As the RSA/Industry Matters report, *More means different*, argues, the task is to change our learning practice from the 'vicious' circles of 1990 to 'virtuous' circles for the 21st century (Ball, 1990).



(Reproduced from Ball, C. (1990) *More means different*, RSA/Industry Matters, 3-4.)

- 4.21 As Ball argues, 'a society where the appetite for learning was as normal as breathing or drinking would provide for its satisfaction'. Fostering such an appetite and satisfying it would produce an improved economic performance for Britain. But the merits in learning are more than narrowly instrumental. A society committed to active citizenship and a developed democracy benefits disproportionately from an informed, confident and skilled adult population. People with good learning experiences seek more, for themselves, their families, and their colleagues. The challenge to extend that experience to everyone is a substantial one, and one to which NIACE is committed.

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APPENDIX: ACRONYMS

ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
APL	Assessment/Accreditation of Prior Learning
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CET	Continuing Education and Training scheme (Lucas company)
EDAP	Employee Development and Assistance Programme (Ford Company)
ET	Employment Training
ETUC	European Trades Union Congress
FESC	Further Education Staff College, now the Staff College
FEU	Further Education Unit
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
ITB	Industrial Training Board
LEA	Local Education Authority
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEDO	National Economic Development Office
NEGI	National Educational Guidance Initiative
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NFOVA	National Record of Vocational Achievement
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SIACE	Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
TECs	Training and Enterprise Councils
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UDACE	Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

WHAT IS NIACE?

The quality of the education and training of the workforce is the single most important factor in determining Britain's future economic competitiveness. Learning pays. This can be seen in the increasing importance of adult participation in education and training across the whole range of post-school institutions and organisations. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) plays a central role in advising on and co-ordinating developments in policy and practice. Founded in 1921 as the British Institute for Adult Education, NIACE is the national federal organisation that represents the interests of everyone concerned with adult learning.

National Institute of Adult
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